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[South Vietnam]: The lull in significant enemy actions continued on 10 April, but there are fresh indications that localized attacks may soon occur in several areas.

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The success of the local elections held last month apparently reflects improvements in the government's organizational ability.

The government now claims control of almost 90 percent of the population and insists that 80 percent of the country's villages and hamlets have popularly elected governments. The elections, which were held in 589 villages and 3,031 hamlets, were designed to reflect the improved security in areas where the Accelerated Pacification Program was conducted, and to offset the establishment of numerous "Liberation Committees" by the Communists.

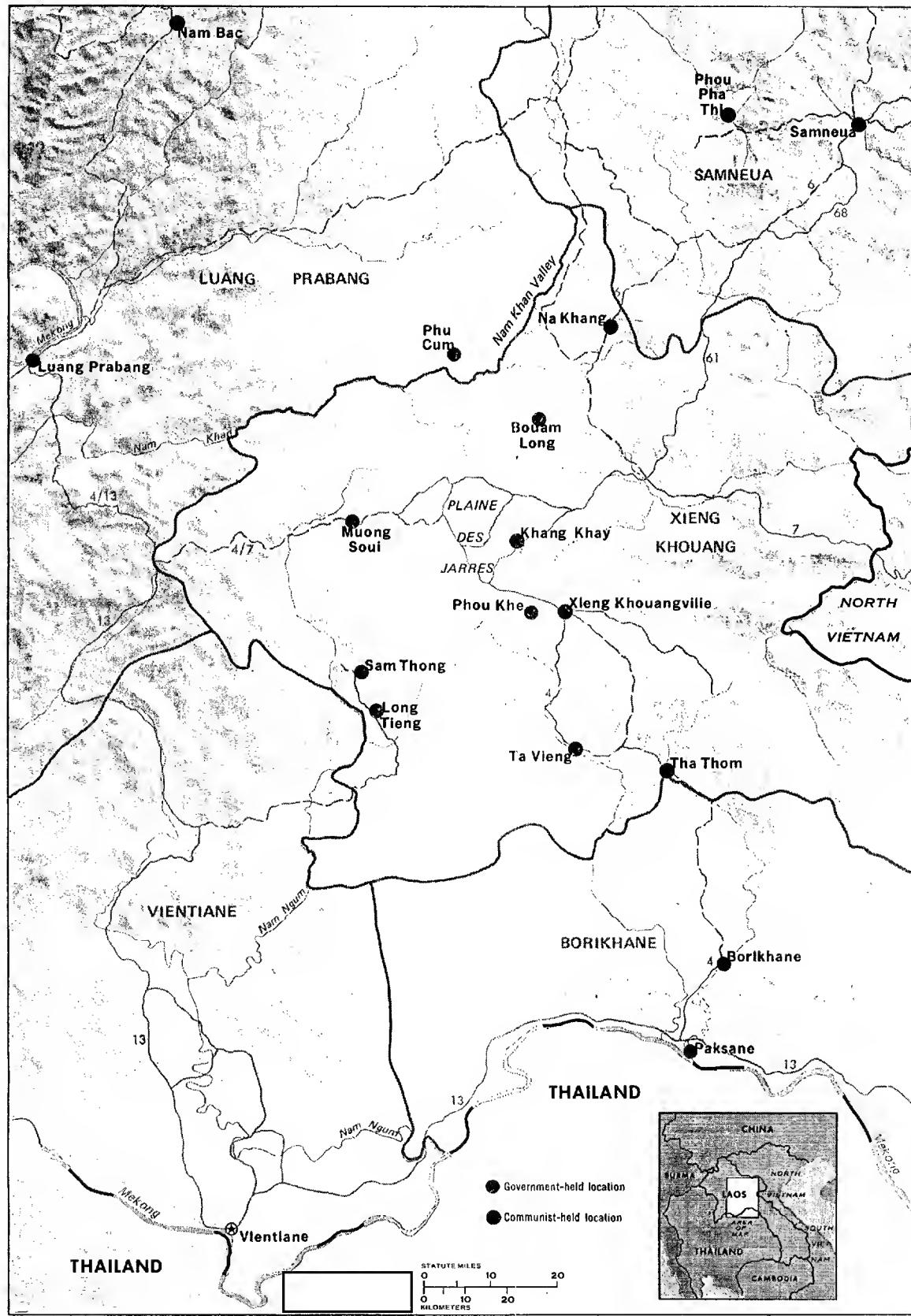
District officials were largely responsible for the relatively smooth conduct of the elections and for the almost 90 percent voter turnout. Viet Cong interruption of the voting was very scattered and only temporary, probably because of good government security and lack of Communist interest. The Communists' mild propaganda campaign denigrating these elections was in sharp contrast to the great concern they generated over the 1967 national elections.

The participation by local residents in the electoral and self-government process has important implications for projected government plans in the countryside. President Thieu has made it clear to US officials that coincident with his efforts at achieving political mobilization the government must be able to meet Communist competition at the hamlet, village, and district levels. He has indicated that he is preparing to build a government cadre force to work at that level, to improve local administration, and to better the lives of rural inhabitants. The elections have probably helped prepare the villagers for such an increased government presence in anticipation of the political struggle.

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LAOS: Current Situation

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Laos: [Enemy forces have so far reacted cautiously to the government counteroffensive in the northeast.]

[Government troops have recently moved into positions just south of Route 4, and are now interdicting Communist troop and supply convoys moving south of Xieng Khouangville. Reinforcements have also been brought into Phou Khe, which was captured two weeks ago, and an effort is under way to drive the enemy from positions to the south. The ease with which the operation has progressed has greatly improved, at least temporarily, the morale of General Vang Pao's forces.]

[A sharp enemy response to these moves--probably delayed in part by the intensive air campaign mounted against the Plaine des Jarres--may be forthcoming. Government troops preparing to attack southwestern portions of the Plaine are likely to encounter stiff resistance in view of the large concentration of Communist forces in that area.]

[The government harassment operations south of the Plaine have not appreciably eased the pressure on government positions to the north. Communist forces have probed the government's newly reoccupied base at Phu Cum and have continued to shell government troops at Bouam Long. No major enemy push has developed so far.]

[In the south, meanwhile, the government has moved fresh troops and supplies onto a high point overlooking the recently abandoned Thateng base. In addition, plans have been drawn up to occupy an adjacent high point in order to block enemy movements on the road into the Bolovens Plateau.]

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[France: Results of recent public opinion polls on the referendum scheduled for 27 April may have prompted De Gaulle's threat to resign if the referendum fails to pass.

In a radio-TV interview on 10 April De Gaulle made clear that his continued tenure in office was linked to a "yes" vote on the referendum, which would give greater administrative autonomy to the provinces and overhaul the Senate. The polls, which bear a striking similarity to earlier polls on the same subject, show a continuing high degree of indifference to the referendum and some hostility, despite an intensified publicity campaign. Of those polled, 52 percent either had no opinion or have not yet decided how they would vote. Only 25 percent expressed an intention to vote yes, while 23 percent planned to vote no.

The poll results also showed that most who planned to vote for or against had little feeling about the regional and senatorial reforms as such but wanted to indicate their confidence or lack thereof in De Gaulle and the government. The general may have concluded that a threat to resign was a safe bet because the same polls also indicated that 54 percent were satisfied with him as president and only 34 percent discontented.

The Gaullists are planning a further massive effort to reduce indifference and gain support for the referendum. A Gaullist "National Committee for Yes" has announced a schedule of 21 major meetings throughout France as well as the publication of a special newspaper. Moreover, many cabinet ministers will participate in the campaign.

All opposition parties are calling for a no vote and there is dissent even among Gaullists over the referendum. Nonetheless, most sources predict De Gaulle]

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C will be able to win his latest political battle. Some observers suggest he might encourage his followers to provoke incidents in order to illustrate the familiar "me or chaos" argument. The four previous referenda submitted by De Gaulle during his tenure were approved.

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Turkey: [Foreign Minister Caglayangil has reaffirmed Turkey's friendship for the US as the key-stone of his country's foreign policy.]

[The foreign minister, while discussing a variety of problems with Secretary Rogers on 8 April, claimed that only a small percentage of the total population is anti-American. He added that Ankara has no intention of restricting Sixth Fleet visits to Turkish ports. He implied, however, that such visits could stir up trouble this year, with elections coming up.]

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[Referring to long-standing negotiations on bilateral agreements, Caglayangil drew attention to the fact that only questions dealing with flexibility of wording, labor strikes, and the duration of the basic agreement remain unresolved. Ankara would like to conclude negotiations by mid-May so that the treaty can be signed before the October elections.]

[Turning to Turkey's economic situation, Caglayangil pointed to the problem created by the decline in US economic and military assistance during the past two years. He urged that Turkey's needs be carefully considered between now and 1972, during which time the economy will come under increasing strain.]

[Concerning Cyprus, Turkey remains determined to safeguard the rights of the Turkish Cypriots and to guarantee a high degree of local autonomy, within a unified state, for the Turkish Cypriot community.]

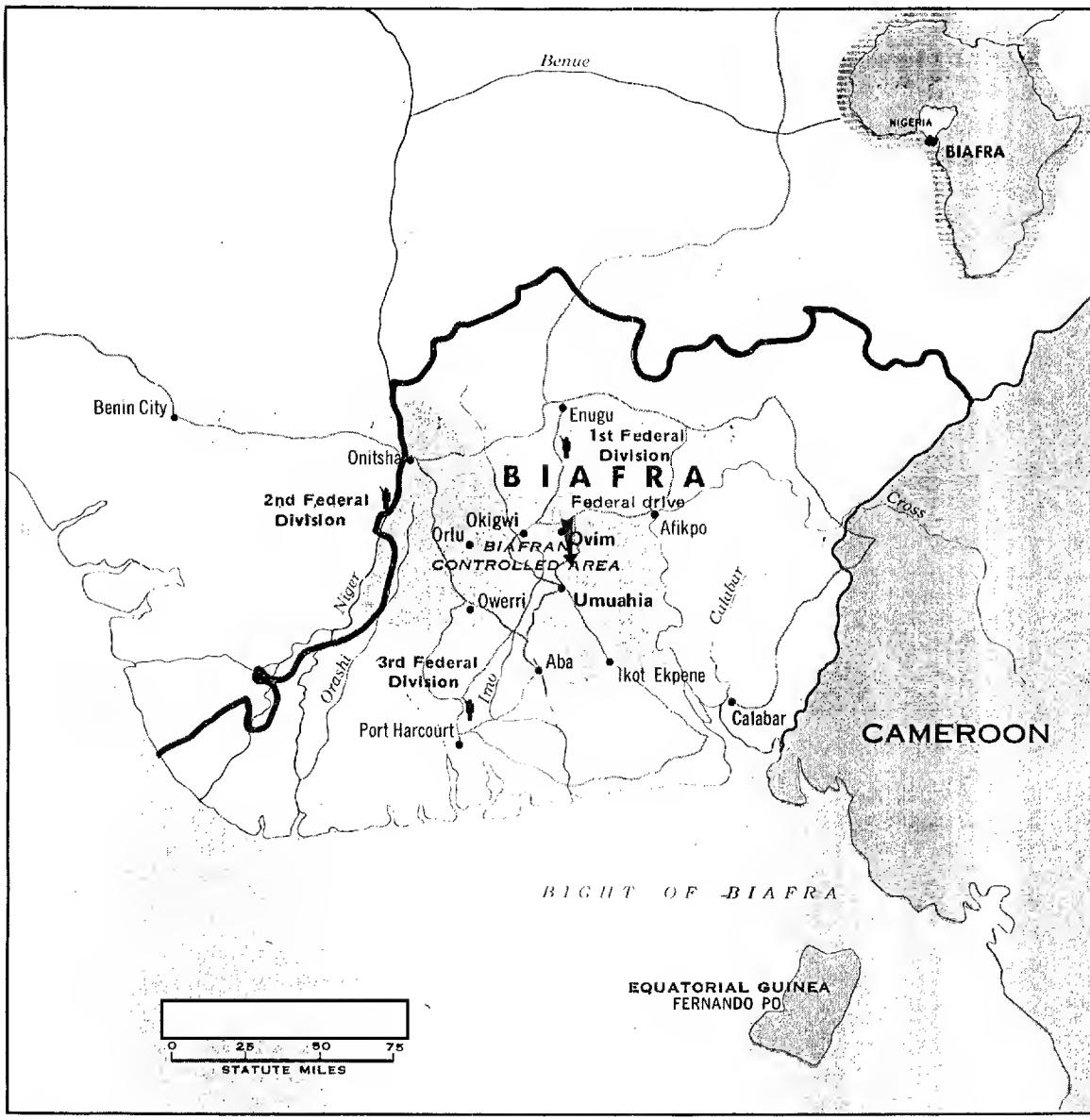
[In Ankara, meanwhile clashes between right- and left-wing students have spread from the campus of Ankara University to the streets. A clash on 9 April, in which Molotov cocktails were allegedly used, resulted from a rightist attempt to break up a leftist student sit-in protesting the slow pace of academic reform. According to the press, the student boycott of classes that began in Ankara last week has now spread to Istanbul.]

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NIGERIA: Federal Drive Stalled

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Nigeria: A federal drive from the north has been halted at least temporarily.

The federal 1st Division drive south from Ovim has stalled, but only after some elements of the division moved to within 11 miles--about 16 miles by road--of Umuahia, the secessionist capital. Umuahia appears to be in no immediate danger of falling to federal troops, but the 1st Division will probably soon attempt to move within artillery range--some seven miles.

In its drive south, the 1st Division showed that it probably does have the capability to threaten Umuahia. The fall of Umuahia to federal forces would represent a significant psychological victory for Lagos, but it would not mark the end of the war. Biafran leader Ojukwu would almost certainly move his headquarters elsewhere, probably in the vicinity of Orlu.

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Greece: The invoking of three of the 12 suspended articles of the 1968 constitution--those dealing with the inviolability of the home, right of assembly, and the formation of nonpolitical associations--does not imply a quicker return of parliamentary rule. Prime Minister Papadopoulos probably hopes by this small concession to placate foreign critics of his government's slow progress toward democracy and, at the same time, to avoid the wrath of those in the junta who see no need for democracy at all. Martial law still exists and invoking the constitutional articles authorizing political activity still seems remote.

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Paraguay: The Stroessner government plans to crack down on its opponents and put an end to "irresponsible" opposition actions, according to Foreign Minister Sapena Pastor. The government, which had become increasingly tolerant of political opposition, is probably smarting over charges that it is to blame for the death of a minor opposition party member who was under police detention. Sapena Pastor says the government also has requested the removal of four Spanish Jesuit activists on the faculty of the Catholic university. It is not yet clear what specific measures the government is contemplating or why Stroessner has decided to reverse his long-standing attempts to liberalize the Paraguayan political atmosphere.

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